AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

In the Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A method for making crustacean bait suitable for use in crustacean traps and pots, the method comprising:

removing substantially all the hair from one or more hides or skins from a mammal, said hides or skins being free of animal blood, by treating said hides or skins with an alkali solution by placing said hides or skins in a mixing device, adding an alkali material to said mixing device, adding water to said mixing device; and agitating said hides or skins, said alkali material, and said water in said mixing device, said alkali material and said water forming an alkali solution, wherein said water temperature is approximately one hundred twenty degrees, and wherein said hides or skins and said alkali solution are agitated in said mixing device for approximately one and one-half to two hours.

neutralizing the pH of said hides or skins after said hides or skins are treated with said alkali solution to remove said hair therefrom by adding an acidic material to a mixing device containing said hides or skins; adding water to said mixing device; and agitating said hides or skins, said acidic material, and said water in said mixing device, said acidic material and said water forming an acidic solution, wherein said water temperature is approximately fifty degrees, and wherein said hides or skins and said acidic solution are agitated in said mixing device for approximately twenty minutes;

curing said hides or skins with a salt solution after said hides or skins have had said hair removed therefrom and are neutralized ; and

cutting said hides or skins into pieces of a desired size suitable for use as crustacean bait.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the amount of said alkali material is approximately fourteen percent by weight of the weight of said hides or skins.

5. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein said removing step additionally comprises: draining said alkali solution from said mixing device; continuously adding rinse water to said mixing device and agitating said hides or skins and said water to rinse said hides and skins; and continuously draining said rinse water from said mixing device.

6. (Original) A method as defined in claim 5, wherein said rinse water temperature is approximately one hundred ten degrees and said hides or skins and said rinse water are agitated in said mixing device for approximately twenty to thirty minutes.

7. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein said alkali material includes at least one of the materials from the group consisting of sodium hydroxide, calcium hydroxide, and magnesium hydroxide.

8. (Cancelled).

9. (Cancelled).

10. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the amount of said acidic material is approximately one pound of acidic material for each fifty pounds of said hides or skins.

11. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein said neutralizing step additionally comprises: checking the pH of said acidic solution to determine whether or not the pH of said acidic solution is at or below a particular level; draining said acidic solution from said mixing device if said pH of said acidic solution is at or below said particular value; and adding an additional quantity of said acidic material to said mixing device if said pH of said acidic solution is not at or below said particular value, and then repeating said agitating and checking steps.

12. (Original) A method as defined in claim 11 wherein said particular value of pH is approximately nine.

13. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein said acidic material is citric acid.

14. (Original) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein said curing step comprises: adding salt to a mixing device containing said hides or skins; and agitating said hides or skins and said salt in said mixing device, said salt curing said hides or skins.

15. (Original) A method as defined in claim 14, wherein the amount of said salt is approximately twenty percent by weight of the weight of the hides.

16. (Original) A method as defined in claim 14, wherein said hides or skins and said salt are agitated in said mixing device for approximately fifteen hours.

17. (Original) A method as defined in claim 14, wherein said curing step additionally comprises: adding a brightening agent to said mixing device containing said hides or skins.

18. (Original) A method as defined in claim 17, wherein said brightening agent comprises: hydrogen peroxide.

19. (Original) A method as defined in claim 1, additionally comprising: rinsing said hides or skins prior to treating said hides or skins with said alkali solution.

20. (Original) A method as defined in claim 19, wherein said rinsing step comprises: adding rinse water to a mixing device containing said hides or skins; and agitating said hides or skins and said rinse water in said mixing device to remove most foreign materials, manure, and/or dirt from said hides or skins.

21. (Original) A method as defined in claim 20, wherein said rinse water temperature is approximately ninety degrees, and wherein said hides or skins and rinse water are agitated in said mixing device for approximately thirty to forty-five minutes.

22. (Original) A method as defined in claim 20, wherein said rinsing step additionally comprises: adding a detergent to said mixing device prior to said agitating step.

23. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 1, additionally comprising: packaging said pieces of hides or skins after curing said hides or skins with said salt solution.

24. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 23, wherein said packaging step comprises: placing a plurality of said pieces of said hides or skins into a plastic container and sealing said plastic container.

25. (Original) A method as defined in claim 24, wherein said pieces of said hides or skins are approximately four inches square.

26. (Original) A method as defined in claim 24, wherein said packaging step additionally comprises: perforating each of said pieces of said hides or skins with a small hole near the center thereof.

27. (Original) A method as defined in claim 24, wherein said packaging step additionally comprises: placing a flavoring additive into said plastic container prior to sealing said plastic container.

28. (Original) A method as defined in claim 27, wherein said flavoring additive comprises: fish oil.

29. (Original) A method as defined in claim 28, wherein said fish oil is derived from a fish from the group consisting of mackerel, tuna, anchovy, herring, and menhaden.

30. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein said mixing device has a plurality of axially inwardly-extending bars to enhance the degree of agitation afforded by rotating said mixing device.

31. (Original) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein said hides or skins comprise: at least one from the group consisting of beef hides, cowhides, veal skins, sow skins, pork skins, or buffalo hides.

32. (Original) A crustacean bait made by the method defined in claim 1.

33. (Previously Presented) A method for making crustacean bait suitable for use

in crustacean traps and pots, the method comprising: rinsing one or more hides or skins from a mammal to remove foreign materials, manure, and/or dirt from said hides or skins; removing all the hair from one or more hides or skins from a mammal by treating said hides or skins with an alkali solution including at least one of an alkali metal hydroxide and an alkaline earth metal hydroxide; neutralizing the pH of said hides or skins after said hides or skins are treated with said alkali solution to remove said hair therefrom; curing said hides or skins with a salt solution after said hides or skins have had said hair removed therefrom and is neutralized, said hides or skins being free of animal blood; cutting said hides or skins into pieces of a desired size suitable for use as crustacean bait; and packaging said hides or skins for distribution to distributors and/or end users.

34. (Original) A crustacean bait made by the method defined in claim 33.

35. (Previously Presented) A method for making crustacean bait suitable for use in crustacean traps and pots, the method comprising: completely removing the hair from one or more hides or skins from a mammal; neutralizing the pH of said hides or skins after said hides or skins are treated to remove said hair therefrom; curing said hides or skins to stabilize them after said hides or skins have had said hair removed therefrom and are neutralized, said hides or skins being free of animal blood; and cutting said hides or skins into pieces of a desired size suitable for use as crustacean bait.

36. (Original) A crustacean bait made by the method defined in claim 35.

37. (Previously Presented) A crustacean bait suitable for use in crustacean traps and pots, the crustacean bait comprising: hides or skins from a mammal having hair, said hides or skins being free of animal blood and having had said hair completely removed by treating said hides or skins with an alkali solution, said hides or skins then having been neutralized to lower the pH to an acceptable level, said hides or skins thereafter

having been cured with a salt solution to stabilize them, said hides or skins then having been cut into pieces of a desired size suitable for use as crustacean bait, wherein the crustacean bait is also substantially free of animal blood.